

Who Are We?

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Who are we? Well, one of the major difficulties we have in honestly answering this question arises from the meanings and etymologies of *identity* and *individual*. These reflect the way that the divergent powers of evolution have fragmented our minds over the millennia, most noticeable in the religious, scientific, and economic beliefs that we are separate from the Divine, Nature, and each other, leading to seven pillars of unwisdom on which Western civilization is based.

The word *identity* has a long, uncertain history. Basically the word derives from the Latin *idem* ‘same’, so *identity* essentially means ‘sameness’. *Idem* derives from the PIE base **i-* pronominal stem, also root of Latin *is, ea, id* ‘he, she, it’ and *item* ‘also, likewise, in like manner’, from which the English word *item* is derived. The PIE base also gave rise to Latin *iterum* ‘again, a second time’, the root of *iterate* ‘repeat’, and *identidem* ‘repeatedly, again and again’, from *idem et idem*, which influenced the formation of *identity*.

The OED tells us that various suggestions have been offered as to the formation of the word. The need was evidently felt of a noun of condition or quality from *idem* to express the notion of ‘sameness’, side by side with those of ‘likeness’ and ‘oneness’ expressed by *similitās* and *ūnitās*: hence the form of the suffix *-ty*, which derives from Latin *-tās*, like *beauty* and *liberty*, from **bellitās* and *libertās*, from *bellus* ‘pretty’ and *liber* ‘free’, respectively. However, *idem* had no combining stem, so there are some speculations about how the Late Latin word *identitās* was formed, giving rise to *identity* via French *identité*.

But what does *identity* mean? Well, the OED gives this second definition: “The sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality.” So *identity* has come to mean that which distinguishes us from other human beings, the plants and other animals, and the rest of the Universe. The primary emphasis is on differences rather than on Sameness—that which we all share—leading to much conflict and suffering.

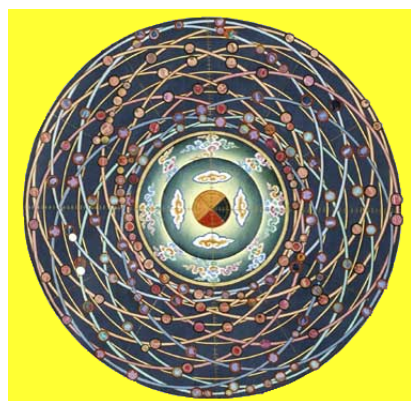
However, the OED gives this primary definition: “The quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness.” The second citation the OED gives for this meaning is from Philemon Holland’s translation of Plutarch’s *Moralia* in 1603: “That the soul of this universal world is not simple, uniform and uncompounded, but mixed ... of a certain power of Identity and of Diversity.”

Indeed. While we are superficially unique, there is some aspect of our beings that is the same for all of us: the Absolute. Thus our True Identity or Authentic Self is that which we can also call Wholeness, Oneness, Truth, Consciousness, Intelligence, and Love, the Divine Essence we all share. Yet, tragically, many have lost touch with our True Nature, fighting holy wars—wars about the Whole—because their precarious sense of identity and security in life is based on separateness—from which fear and anxiety arise—rather than on Wholeness.

Paradoxically, this divisiveness is also evident in the word *individual*, which derives from Middle English, ‘single, indivisible’, from Medieval Latin *indivīduālis*, from Latin *indivīduus*, from *in-* ‘not’ and *dīviduus* ‘divisible’, from *dīvidere* ‘to divide’. Appropriately, the OED gives these first two definitions, both now obsolete: (1) “One in substance or essence; forming an indivisible entity; indivisible.” (2) “That cannot be separated; inseparable”. In contrast, OED’s third definition is “(a) Existing as a separate indivisible entity; numerically one, single, (b) Single, as distinct from others of the same kind; particular, special.” This definition indicates that many individuals are more concerned today with their own ego-centric and ethnic needs than those of humanity as a whole, threatening the very survival of our species.

Thankfully, today, the convergent powers of evolution are helping us to heal our fragmented, schizoid minds and hence our grievously sick society. We are learning to end the long-running war between science and religion through the convergence of rationality and mystical ancient wisdom, knowing in our own intimate experience that we all live in union with the Divine at every instant of our lives.

For instance, these words of *The Mandukya Upanishad* reflect this sense of unity, healing our split minds: “Brahman is all, and the Self is Brahman. ... Those who know AUM as Self become the Self.” This classic *Upanishad*—the shortest of all—describes three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep—embraced by *Turiya* ‘fourth’, which is not a state. The Whole is represented in this familiar symbol of everlasting joy.



Another symbol for Wholeness is the jewel net of Indra in Chinese Buddhism, called Huayan ‘Flower Garland’. Indra’s net consists of an infinite number of jewels, each reflecting all other jewels, so that in Fazang’s cosmology, all beings are causal agents for the entire Universe, relationships being primary. Thus all beings are interdependent with the same Identity and Essence, which he called Suchness (*Tathatā*) and Emptiness (*Shūnyatā*), but which we can also call Fullness in conformity with the Principle of Unity: *Wholeness is the union of all opposites*.

In modern science, Indra’s net thus provides a metaphor for the holographic nature of the Universe, as in David Bohm’s theory of the Implicate Order, which unified quantum and relativity theories. Bohm called reality the ‘holomovement’, an undivided flowing movement, from which no beings are separate, like the waves and ripples on a stream—the river of Life.

Generalizing this river into an ocean, we can see that all beings are abstractions from or appearances in the vast Ocean of Consciousness, called *Satchidananda* in the East, ‘the bliss of Absolute Consciousness’, a compound of *sat* ‘absolute, eternal, unchanging Being, Truth’, *chit* ‘absolute Consciousness’, and *ananda* ‘bliss, absolute joy’. Thus the entire relativistic world of form is simply *maya* ‘delusion, appearance, illusion’, the delightful play of the Divine, called *lila*. As the Advaita sages teach, there is no doership, no independent people who can be said to own anything or to have the free will to choose the way they live.

Using a metaphor from mathematics, the Universe can be considered a fractal, with the property of self-similarity, no matter which section of the mathematical map or graph we might look at. Such a holistic principle is an inherent property of Integral Relational Logic (IRL), the egalitarian, commonsensical science of thought and consciousness that we all implicitly use everyday to form concepts and organize our ideas in tables and semantic networks. For IRL has holotropically evolved from the semantic modelling methods that information systems architects use to build the Internet, equally applicable in all cultures, disciplines, and industries.

IRL thus provides the transgalactic Cosmic Context, coordinating framework, and Divine Essence for all knowledge, which we can call the Unified Relationships Theory (URT), showing that relationships are paramount, the primary motive force in the Universe—not nodes, as lumps of matter—a generalization of the physicists’ concept of field. Like an architect’s blueprint for a house, IRL could thus provide the blueprint for rebuilding the education system and the global sharing economy on the seven pillars of wisdom, recognizing that all of us are Individuals—undivided beings—whose Genuine Identity is Wholeness.

In this marvellous way, we shall thus have passed through evolution’s Singularity in time into the glorious eschatological Age of Light, intelligently living in the Eternal Now. We shall then know that death is an illusion, living in love, peace, and harmony with each other and our environment, which ultimately is Consciousness, not the social or biophysical environment we depend on for our daily needs.